**In The Specification:**

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Fig. 9 depicts the beginning of another dispatch cycle, dispatch cycle 3. At the beginning of dispatch cycle 3, the status of each output link is again determined by the buffer controller. In the example of Fig. 9, at the start of dispatch cycle 3, output link A is unavailable, output link B is available, and ~~output link 3 is available~~ output link C is available. According to the technique, the first packet to be examined in dispatch cycle 3 is the head packet. The head packet in dispatch cycle 2 (packet A2 as identified by the linked list HEAD pointer 336) is intended for output link A, which is currently unavailable, and therefore the head packet cannot be dispatched in this cycle. As described above, the buffer controller continues to examine packets to identify a packet that is intended for an available output link. The next packet in the linked list is identified by the buffer controller using the NEXT pointer of the head packet. The next packet is examined (i.e., by examining the output link ID of the packet) to determine whether or not the packet is intended for an available output link. In the example of Fig. 4, the next packet, packet A3, is intended for output link A, which is currently unavailable and therefore the next packet in the linked list is examined. The next packet, packet B2, is intended for an available output link. Because packet B2 is intended for an available output link, it is dispatched to its intended output link. The process is continued sequentially by examining subsequent packets on the linked list to see if any other buffered packets can be dispatched to any other available output links. In the example of Fig. 9, packet C3 is the next packet that is intended for an available output link, so packet C3 is also dispatched in dispatch cycle 3. The linked list is adjusted, as described above, to delete the dispatched packets from the linked list.